(c) West Bengal have already prepared an action plan for electrification of 1791 villages at an estimated cost of Rs. 140.8 crores in the first phase for funding by REC. The work in these villages is likely to commence by the end of this year.

In Bihar, PGCIL have already been entrusted the work of electrification of about 2400 villages in Vaishali and Muzzaffarpur districts by the State Government out of funds from PMGY/MNP/State Plan. The electrification works for 1200 villages are scheduled to be completed progressively from Sept., 2004 to May 2005 while for the balance of 1200 villages the award is likely to be placed by Sept. 2004.

Jharkhand has indicated its intention of seeking the services of various CPSUs for execution of new projects to be financed by REC.

Uttar Pradesh has also indicated its intention of seeking the services of CPSUs for execution of some rural electrification projects.

Recommendations of NCAER

1552. SHRIMATI KAMLA MANHAR: Will the Minister of POWER be pleased to state:

(a) whether the National Council of Applied Economic Research (NCAER) has submitted a report to the Central Electricity Regulatory Commission containing suggestions, ways and means for enabling power consumers to select power distribution company of their choice and also to generate more competition among power suppliers;

(b) if so, salient features of the report; and

(c) whether as per the recommendations of NCAER ordinary households consuming less than 1 MW will also be given choice to select their power supplier?

THE MINISTER OF POWER (SHRI P.M. SAYEED): (a) and (b) The CERC has commissioned the National Council of Applied Economic Research (NCAER) for preparation of a Consultation Paper on "Introducing competition in generation of Electricity" in the month of May, 2004. NCAER has submitted a draft paper on the subject to the CERC. The paper has been circulated by the Commission for public hearing.

(c) The report of NCAER deals with the issue of choice to select power supplier by consumers. The report also refers to sub-section (2) of Section 42 of the Electricity Act, 2003 which provides for open access to distribution networks to all consumers of 1 MW and above within a limit of 5 years.

Implementation of Loktak Down Stream and Tipaimukh Power Projects in Manipur

1553. SHRI RISHANG KEISHING: Will the Minister of POWER be pleased to state:

(a) whether Power projects in Manipur namely Tipaimukh Dam and Loktak Down Stream are going to be implemented;

(b) if answer to (a) is affirmative the names of the agencies and the time schedule of implementation of the projects; and

(c) if answer to (a) above is in the negative, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF POWER (SHRI P.M. SAYEED): (a) to (c) The Tipaimukh Hydro Electric Multipurpose Project (1500 MW) on river Barak in Manipur was accorded Techno-Economic Clearance by the Central Electricity Authority on 02.07.2003 at an estimated cost of Rs. 5163.86 crores including IDC at December, 2002 price level. The project is scheduled for commissioning in 87 months from the date of investment approval.

The Standing Committee on Energy has recommended to exclude the expenses on security, flood moderation and road from the project cost so as to make the tariff viable. Also as benefits from flood moderation, constructions of roads, etc. are to be shared by the State Governments, funds released for flood control and construction of roads by respective Ministries should be infused in these projects.

Steps have been initiated to bring down the tariff to make it commercially, viable and saleable after adding the transmission costs as the power would need to be wheeled out of the N.E. Region, in line with the recommendations made by the Standing Committee on Energy. In the meantime, North Eastern Electric Power Corporation Ltd. (NEEPCO) has recently been asked to complete the field studies for the project at site including validating the Detailed Project Report (DPR) data.